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## The Russian Eccentrics-- Kuleshov and Pudovkin:

### The Death Ray (Luch smerti)

9:30

"Then came my next film, *The Death Ray*, which was not too well thought of at home. Admittedly it was too conscious an imitation of the American Cinema. There were too many tricks in it...." (Lev Kuleshov). An extremely rare film, *The Death Ray* has been preserved in a print with one reel missing. The lost reel adds much to the already existing confusion of this intermittently brilliant failure. Stephen P. Hill describes the widely improbable action as follows: "Sinister doings in an unnamed western country: noble, dedicated leader (Komarov) is imprisoned by Fascists but escapes jail and comes to brilliant Soviet inventor (Podobed) to get his laser-like "death ray"--which is stolen by masked Jesuit gunman

(Pudovkin) for the Fascist side—who is then hunted down by (Fogel), with whom he has a terrifying, unforgettable fight to the death.' For assistant director/scenarist/actor Pudovkin, *The Death Ray* was the stepping stone to his career as a director: he never failed to credit his mentor Kuleshov for his ideas on filmmaking, indeed for the concept of montage which became the basic tool in Soviet silent film construction." --Tom Luddy, Yvette Biro

- Directed by Lev Kuleshov. Written by V. I. Pudovkin. Assistant Directors, Pudovkin, Alexandra Khoklova, Sergei Komarov, Leonid Obolensky. Photographed by Alexander Levitsky. Design by Pudovkin and Vasili Rakhals. With Komarov, Porfiri Podobed, Pudovkin, Vladimir Fogel. (1925, 100 mins, Silent with Russian intertitles and live English translation, 35mm. Print from PFA Collection)